

Gaelic Hurling”—study history and cultural significance of the Gaelic sport of hurling; learn to cut and carve hurley sticks using ash wood salvaged from central Indiana forests decimated by the emerald ash borer.

Martha Sando, “2007: To Russia with Love, From Moscow to St. Petersburg”—view art collections in St. Petersburg and Moscow; hone plein air landscape painting technique; create classroom lessons on painting techniques, history and culture of Russia.

MSD Wayne Township, McClelland Elementary School, Eric Webb (principal), “Bringing My Ancestors to Dinner”—investigate Clan McLeod, capture images, poetry, songs and stories of Scotland.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House here, the 30-Something Working Group. I am glad that we are here tonight to have an opportunity to really talk about the accomplishments under the 110th Congress, and also issues that we are going to be working on in the very near future.

But as you know, Mr. Speaker, day after day I have been coming to the floor sharing with the Members and the American people on the fact that we have really worked hard to make sure that we run a house in a way that all the Members can feel comfortable about voting on the public policy that comes to this floor, especially major public policy.

The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act that passed this floor today is a piece of legislation that is going to assist not only the public knowing more about what happens here, but to make sure that we protect those that are trying to protect us.

As we start to head down the road of fiscal responsibility, as we start to

have oversight hearings and Federal employees and others that are involved in Federal action, and just average Americans will be able to come forward and to share with this Congress and other agencies of accountability and oversight about waste, they will be able to come and share concerns or speculation of corruption, they will be able to come forth with recommendations without receiving the repercussions that they would have received prior to the passing of this legislation today.

One other thing that I think is important when we start looking at this legislation, the fact that there were 102 Members on the other side of the aisle that voted in the affirmative. The vote on this floor just moments ago was 331-94. And I think that will go right in line with other pieces of legislation that have passed this House floor in a bipartisan way on a major bill. I think we have a chart here that I think will be helpful for the Members to take a look at.

Implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations, H.R. 1, passed 299-128, with 68 Republicans voting with the Democrats.

Raising the minimum wage passed 315-116, with 82 Republicans voting along with Democrats.

The funding for enhanced stem cell research, H.R. 3, 253 Members of the House voted in the affirmative, only 147 voted against. But as you know, Republican votes, 37 joined Democrats on that vote.

Making prescription drugs more affordable for seniors, H.R. 4, passed 255-170, with 24 Republicans voting with Democrats.

Cutting student loan interest rates in half, H.R. 5, 356-71, with 124 Republicans voting for it with all Democrats.

Creating long-term energy initiatives, I think it is an important initiative, H.R. 6, 264-163, with 36 Republicans voting with Democrats.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, why is this important? Why are we talking about bipartisanship so much when we come to the floor in the 30-Something Working Group? We are talking about it because this has not been the culture here in the House. Major pieces of legislation, from H.R. 1 to H.R. 6, and even today when we passed off of this floor the Whistleblower Act, H.R. 985, to see bipartisan votes on these major pieces of legislation goes to show you that we have been waiting; and when I say “we,” Members of the House have been waiting for a very long time to have the opportunity to vote on common-sense legislation that is going to assist the American people in their everyday lives, will assist this Congress in bringing about the kind of accountability that the American people voted for and hoped that we would, hopefully, enact one day.

I think it is also important to look at three House bills to shed light on pub-

lic records. I think it is very important that the American people understand that we are going to open the Federal Government up to allow them to be able to receive public records in a timely manner. Of course, we are going to protect national security issues. Of course, documents that are not ready for public consumption will not be given to the public or anyone that may endanger Americans abroad or here in the United States. But there are so many documents by the White House that have been deemed secret when it wasn't necessary for them to be deemed secret. This piece of legislation and the three bills would deal with that issue, to be able to have a little more openness to the process so that we can do our jobs here on Capitol Hill.

I think it is important to continue to stick with the watchwords that we have been talking about here, the 30-Something Working Group, on accountability, oversight, new direction, and fiscal responsibility. I think it is important that we pay attention to what is happening right now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to Hurricane Katrina, Abu Ghraib, 9/11 Commission recommendations, which I must add that 10 Republicans and the Senate joined Democrats in passing the 9/11 Commission recommendations. All of these reports, as we look at good government, are taken from bipartisan commissions.

We are talking about governance here. We are talking about accountability here. Some may say, well, 9/11 Commission recommendations, that is a Democratic work product. No. That is just a Democratic leadership bill, that we said that we would fully implement the 9/11 recommendations even though the President has threatened to veto them. Even though it was a bipartisan commission, Mr. Speaker, chaired by a Republican Governor, former Governor, still the President and Republicans are saying that there is not a need to implement those recommendations.

I think, as we start to reflect, before I start talking about the supplemental appropriations bill that is being marked up in the Appropriations Committee this week, since Democrats have taken the majority, Mr. Speaker, Walter Reed, the misconduct was exposed by a newspaper here in the Washington area, The Washington Post. Democrats took action, making sure that we had hearings going immediately, not after, not 2 or 3 weeks later, saying we are waiting on the administration to see what they are going to do.

In kind, the administration started working very vigorously to take some action, and I commend the President on appointing two very outstanding Americans, Ms. Shalala and also Mr. Dole, to lead a commission to look at that.

The firing of U.S. District Attorneys became exposed recently, within the last 48 hours. Information that we received here in Congress was inaccurate.